



# Local courts see a decrease in cases

by Patrick Bilow  
Herald Reporter

Court systems that serve Leadville and Lake County are noticing a decrease in case filings amid the ongoing pandemic and a variety of issues for local law enforcement. Yet court officials are not convinced that crime is down.

Lake County Combined Court, which includes dockets for county court and district court, and Leadville Municipal Court serve a variety of functions. County court addresses civil cases under \$25,000, misdemeanors and traffic infractions, while district court handles civil cases over \$25,000, felonies, domestic relations and more. Municipal court, on the other hand, deals primarily with violations of city laws within city limits such as traffic infractions and minor disturbances.

Over the last few years, Lake County Court has experienced a decrease in new cases filed. In 2016, Lake County Court filed 1,278 cases. Five years later, that figure has decreased to 669 cases, according to annual reports

published by the Colorado Judicial Branch.

Since 2016, annual case filings for Lake County Court have decreased steadily each year. From 2016 to 2017, annual filings decreased by 98 cases. A similar drop occurred from 2017 to 2018. In 2018, Lake County Court handled 290 fewer cases than 2019. Once the pandemic took hold in 2020, case filings dropped by 131, decreasing again slightly in 2021.

According to Lake County Judge Jonathan Shamis, who sometimes also serves on district court, the decrease in county cases is due to a number of factors, including the pandemic, inadequate holding facilities and staffing shortages within the Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO).

Currently, inmates arrested by LCSO are transported to Washington, Teller or Adams counties because LCSO does not have a jail. Shamis said LCSO's current intake process creates an impossibility for arraignment arrests and strains LCSO resources, which are already limited. As a result, Lake County Combined Court has

been more selective of which cases will appear on the docket.

Sheriff Amy Reyes discussed

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## Celebrating diversity



Photo by Patrick Bilow  
A group of Full Circle of Lake County participants gather around the mural they helped create, which now hangs from the west-facing wall of the nonprofit's building on East Seventh Street. Pictured from left are Brailee Plane, Kennedy Duran, Madison Woodland, Meredith Saldivar, Myrian Silva, Alison Bujanda, Melany Lopez, Zoe VanderWeit, Aaliyah Landa and Jennifer Mata. More coverage of the mural is found on page 9.

# Jimenez is awarded citizenship medal

by Patrick Bilow  
Herald Reporter

Fabian Jimenez, a Lake County High School graduate who recently finished his first semester at Colorado School of Mines in Golden, was awarded the Colorado Governor's Citizenship Medal in late 2021.

The award, which honored eight recipients throughout Colorado, cites Jimenez as an emerging community leader for his efforts to improve young voter turnout during the 2020 presidential election, when Jimenez was a senior at Lake County High School (LCHS).

Jimenez was joined by

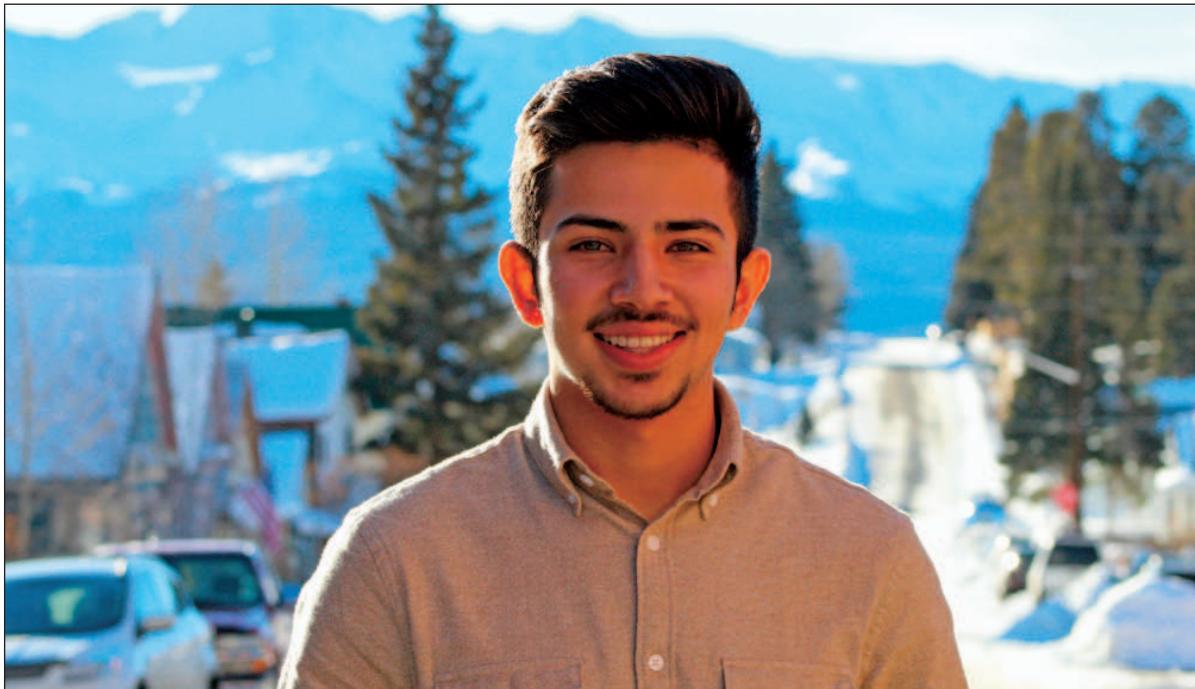


Photo by Patrick Bilow

Fabian Jimenez, a Leadville local who currently attends Colorado School of Mines, is a recipient of the Colorado Governor's Citizenship Medal.

seven notable Coloradans who also received the award, including Jill Ryan, executive director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, citizen journalist Jerry Gryglak, former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb and former Colorado General Assemblywoman Wilma Webb.

The ceremony has been rescheduled from January to March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Should the ceremony proceed in person in March, Jimenez will meet Governor Jared Polis and past Colorado governors who are still living.

Jimenez's efforts to improve

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